

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1887

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ET

SUBJ: CISCO TWO: INTERVIEW WITH AMERICAN PRISONERS

REF: KHARTOUM 1878

1. AUGUST 5 INTERVIEW OF CAMPBELL AND HARRELL BY FRENCH JOURNALIST BITTERLIN (REFTEL) CONTAINS FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS.

2. HARRELL IDENTIFIED SELF AS 40 YEARS OLD, TRANSMITTER OPERATOR, RESIDENT OF ASMARA SINCE 1967, BEFORE WHICH HE SERVED IN US ARMY. CAMPBELL SAID HE 27 YEARS OLD, TRANSMITTER SUPERVISOR IN ASMARA FOR FOURTEEN MONTHS AND PREVIOUSLY IN US NAVY IN SPAIN AND ON BOARD SHIP IN MEDITERRANEAN. BOTH ANSWERED IN NEGATIVE WHEN ASKED WHETHER THEY HAD SERVED IN VIETNAM. BOTH SAID THEY WERE CIVILIAN CONTRACTORS TO US NAVY.

2. CAMPBELL SAID THERE WERE FIFTY AMERICAN CIVILIANS AND TEN NAVY PEOPLE, INCLUDING ONE OFFICER, AT KAGNEW. HE SAID ROLE OF STATION IS TO SUPPORT US NAVY AND ADDED: "WE HAVE EQUIPMENT TO SUPPORT STATE DEPARTMENT AIRPLANES FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER AND THE PRESIDENT".

3. BOTH MEN SAID THEY DID NOT KNOW WHY THEY WERE KIDNAPPED. ASKED WHAT THEY THINK ABOUT THE SITUATION IN ERITREA, CAMPBELL
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SAID THAT INFORMATION ON THE MATTER WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO HIM IN

ASMARA AND THAT AMERICAN ENCYCLOPEDIA TREAT ETHIOPIA AS A WHOLE. CAMPBELL ADDED THAT THE PEOPLE IN ASMARA TRY TO REPORT CONDITIONS THERE BUT THE NEWS DOESN'T GET OUT TO THE WORLD.

4. INTERVIEWER ASKED WHETHER PRISONERS KNEW THAT USG HELPING ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF ERITREA. CAMPBELL REPLIED "I DO NOW" BUT THEN SAID HE HAD NOT KNOWN BEFORE: "USG NEVER ANNOUNCED IT".

5. BOTH MEN DENIED THEY WORKED FOR THE CIA. TO QUESTION ABOUT NUMBER OF CIA AGENTS THERE ARE IN ASMARA, CAMPBELL SAID: "IF THERE IS ANYONE FROM CIA IN ASMARA, WE SHOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT. IF WE DID, HE WOULDN'T BE A VERY GOOD CIA AGENT".

6. CAMPBELL SAID THEY HAD BEEN TREATED WELL, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD HAD ONLY ORANGES TO EAT FOR THE FIRST TWO DAYS.

7. COMMENT: BITTERLIN TOLD US THAT HE WAS PUSHED TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT USG AID TO EPMG AND CIA BY PLF OFFICIALS PRESENT AT INTERVIEW. THIS IS EVIDENT FROM TAPE. INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH, ALTHOUGH BITTERLIN'S ENGLISH IS MINIMAL AND HE SPOKE TO PLF OFFICIALS IN FRENCH.
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